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Hiss Says F. B. I. Files Support Some of His Claims of Innocence

By PETER KIHSS

Alger Hiss said last night that newly available files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation show that agents knew that a former maid's son had Mrs. Hiss's typewriter before the time she was alleged to have typed documents on it for a Soviet spy network.

He also said the files show that agents told the late F. B. I. director, J. Edgar Hoover, that the Hiss typewriter was bought in 1928 but that the typewriter put into evidence in his 1949 and 1950 perjury trials had a number indicating it had been manufactured more than a year later.

It was the first time Mr. Hiss had declared that such points

similar to those he had unsuccessfully argued in the past were supported by F. B. I. files released under a Freedom of Information Act suit.

Once again, this time to an audience of 250 persons at the Overseas Press Club at the Biltmore Hotel, he declared "I never handed Whittaker Chambers any State Department documents. I never engaged in espionage and I was never a member of the Communist Party or involved in any of their activities."

The statements by Mr. Hiss, a former State Department official whom Mr. Chambers had accused of being a spy partner, came a day after a Smith College professor asserted on the

Continued on Page 10, Column 4
Continued From Page 1, Col. 2

basis of the newly released F. B. I. material and study of Hiss defense records, that he believed Mr. Hiss had lied and stolen the documents.

Mr. Hiss's denial to a grand jury that he had given documents to Mr. Chambers in a spy plot led to his perjury conviction by a jury in Federal Court here Jan. 21, 1950. He served 44 months in prison from March 22, 1951, to Nov. 27, 1954.

The professor, Allen Weinstein, whose suit had made the F. B. I. materials available, said yesterday that he left "sorry" for Mr. Hiss. But he said, "I tried to piece together the whole fabric of evidence which seems to me, much to my surprise, to have gone the other way in terms of the position I began with."

Mr. Hiss's appearance was to help announce a new book, "Alger Hiss: The True Story,"

by John Chabot Smith, a former New York Herald Tribune reporter, which supports Mr. Hiss's assertion of innocence and suggests how Mr. Chambers could have obtained the documents involved by other means.

Mr. Smith urged last night that Congress, whose investigations started the Hiss case, should use its investigative powers to undertake a new study of material now available.

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The examples Mr. Hiss cited as found by his supporters in the F. B. I. files included:

A bureau report that Perry Catlett, son of a former Hiss maid, had responded after lengthy questioning that the



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Allen Weinstein at Smith College yesterday.

Hiss typewriter had been given to the Catlett family when the Hisses moved to a new home

about the beginning of January 1938. Typed excerpts and summaries from documents Mr. Hiss assertedly gave Mr. Chambers were dated January to April 1938.

An F. B. I. urgent telegram of May 17, 1949, asserting that "investigation had established" that the Woodstock typewriter found by the Hiss defense and introduced at the trial could not have been the family machine. Comparisons were used at the trial to cite products from the machine as the same as the Chambers documents.

F. B. I. knowledge before trial that Navy Department documents reproduced on two so-

called "pumpkin" microfilms released only last summer had been "kept on open shelves at the Bureau of Standards library," available to anyone.

Mr. Hiss also charged that other F. B. I. papers showed that document experts retained by his defense lawyers were "having their tax returns" subjected to intensive investigations and some then "changed their opinions."

Mr. Hiss also commented on a defense lawyer's memorandum that was cited by Professor Weinstein as indicating that on Dec. 7, 1946, Mr. Hiss remembered that the typewriter had been given to the Catlett family. Mr. Hiss said, "I do not recall making this statement." But he said he had suggested "household employees" as persons from whom his lawyers should look for the machine.

Meanwhile, John H. F. Shattuck, counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union in the lawsuit that obtained release of 15,376 pages of F. B. I. files for Professor Weinstein, said that a hearing would be held before Federal Judge William E. Jones in Washington Monday. The judge will be asked to review in private 1,000 more pages that the F. B. I. argues are exempt from release.

Professor Weinstein is writing a book, "Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case," which he hopes to complete about next December or January for publication by Alfred A. Knopf Inc.